

Message Text

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44

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10

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FM AMEMBASSY OSLO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7087

INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

USCINCEUR

USNMR SHAPE

CINCLANT

USDOCS AFNORTH

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MILITARY ADDRESSES ALSO FOR POLADS

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SUBJECT: NORWEGIAN ELECTIONS: LABOR LIKELY TO RETURN TO POWER

REFS: (A) OSLO 3301 (NOTAL) (B) OSLO A-204 (C) OSLO 3250

BEGIN SUMMARY. RESULTS OF NORWAY'S SEPTEMBER 10 ELECTIONS
ARE STILL UNCERTAIN. AT THE MOMENT THE SOCIALISTS ARE
SHOWING A 78-77 LEAD OVER THE NON-SOCIALIST PARTIES;
BARRING A CHANGE WHEN COUNTING IS COMPLETED, A LABOR PARTY
MINORITY GOVERNMENT WILL BE FORMED, PROBABLY IN OCTOBER.

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WHILE SUCH A RESULT WOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH PRE-ELECTION
POLLS, THE INTERNAL MIX ON THE SOCIALIST SIDE IS DIFFERENT
THAN EXPECTED; LABOR CLEARLY HAS LOST ANY HOPE OF
REGAINING ITS POSITION AS A MAJORITY PARTY, AND THE ALLI-

ANCE OF LEFTIST SOCIALISTS AND COMMUNISTS, WITH 16 SEATS, DID FAR BETTER THAN THE POLLS HAD FORESHADOWED. AT LEAST ONE RESULT WILL BE THAT ATTACKS ON NORWAY'S TIES WITH THE WEST WILL NOW BE HEARD FROM WITHIN THE PARLIAMENT ITSELF. END SUMMARY.

1. A MINORITY LABOR PARTY GOVERNMENT HEADED BY FORMER PRIME MINISTER TRYGVE BRATTELI SEEMS AT MID-DAY THE MOST LIKELY RESULT OF YESTERDAY'S ELECTIONS. ON THE BASIS OF AN ALMOST COMPLETE VOTE COUNT, LABOR AND THE SOCIALIST ELECTORAL ALLIANCE TOGETHER APPEAR TO HAVE SECURED 78 SEATS IN THE 155-MAN STORTING, GIVING THE SOCIALISTS A MAJORITY OF ONE. ABSENTEE BALLOTS ARE STILL TO BE COUNTED IN SOME KEY DISTRICTS, HOWEVER, AND ALL TALLIES MUST BE RECHECKED; ANOTHER SWING OF THE PENDULUM THUS REMAINS POSSIBLE BEFORE THE DAY IS OVER.

2. WITH THE MAIN QUESTION STILL UNANSWERED, SOME RESULTS ARE NONETHELESS CLEAR. EVEN THOUGH THE LABOR PARTY MAY RETURN TO POWER, THE ELECTION WAS LITTLE SHORT OF A DIS-ASTER FOR LABOR. IN ALMOST A MAJORITY POSITION FOR DECADES, LABOR YESTERDAY POLLED ONLY 35.6 PER CENT OF THE NATIONAL VOTE--FAR LESS THAN ANY OF THE PRE-ELECTION PUBLIC OPINION POLLS HAD SUGGESTED--AND HAS PROBABLY LOST 12 SEATS IN THE STORTING (DOWN FROM 74 IN THE 1969 ELECTION TO 62 THIS YEAR). THE LOSSES PRIMARILY WERE TO THE FAR LEFT; THE SOCIALIST ELECTORAL ALLIANCE--AN ELECTORAL COALITION OF THE COMMUNISTS, THE SOCIALIST PEOPLE'S PARTY, AND THE LATEST BREAKAWAY GROUP FROM LABOR, THE SO-CALLED "DEMO-CRATIC SOCIALISTS-AIK"--REGISTERED 11 PERCENT OF THE VOTE AND APPEARS TO HAVE WON 16 SEATS--AGAIN, SEVERAL MORE THAN ANY OF THE POLLS WOULD HAVE FORESHADOWED. FOR THE LEADERSHIP OF THE LABOR PARTY, THEREFORE, THE TROUBLESOME MESSAGE WOULD APPEAR TO BE THAT THE WAVE OF THE FUTURE IS ON THE LEFT. AND WHEREAS THERE IS ONLY ONE MEMBER OF THE OUTGOING STORTING WHO WOULD HAVE VOTED FOR WITHDRAWAL FROM NATO, IF THE QUESTION HAD ARISEN, ALL 16 OF THE NEW LEFTIST
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SOCIALISTS ARE OPPOSED TO NATO MEMBERSHIP AND IN FAVOR OF DRASTIC CUTS IN DEFENSE SPENDING. THEIR NUMBERS ARE TOO SMALL FOR PRECIPITATE ACTION, BUT WE FACE A NEW PHENOMENON IN THAT FOR THE NEXT FOUR YEARS ATTACKS ON NORWAY'S WESTERN ORIENTATION IN SECURITY MATTERS--AND ON THE US--WILL BE HEARD FROM WITHIN THE HALLS OF THE STORTING ITSELF.

3. SOME OF THE PERSONALITIES IN THE WIN AND LOSS COLUMN ARE ALSO OF INTEREST. NORWAY'S LIBERAL PARTY, WHICH HAD 13 SEATS IN THE STORTING BEFORE IT SPLIT IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE COMMON MARKET DEBATE, HAS NOW FALLEN ON HARD TIMES, INDEED. THE LIBERALS ARE RETURNING ONLY TWO MEMBERS,

INCLUDING PRESENT MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND SHIPPING HALLVARD EIKA. HELGE SEIP, THE HIGHLY RESPECTED CHAIRMAN OF THE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE AND CHAIRMAN OF THE NEW PEOPLE'S PARTY AFTER THE LIBERAL PARTY SPLIT, APPEARS TO HAVE LOST HIS SEAT; IF SO, HIS INFLUENCE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS WILL BE SORELY MISSED. THERE IS A THEORETICAL POSSIBILITY THAT THE OSLO ABSENTEE BALLOTS WILL SAVE SEIP, BUT AS OF NOW IT LOOKS LIKE HIS NEW PEOPLE'S PARTY HAS ELECTED ONLY ONE CANDIDATE--OLE MYRVOLL, MAYOR OF BERGEN AND A FORMER MINISTER OF FINANCE. THREE MEMBERS OF THE PRESENT CABINET LOST THEIR SEATS: DEFENSE MINISTER JOHAN KLEPPE (LIBERAL), CONSUMER MINISTER EVA KOLSTAD (LIBERAL), AND AGRICULTURE MINISTER EINAR MOXNES (CENTER). OTHER NOTABLES WHO WERE DEFEATED INCLUDE FORMER JUSTICE MINISTER ODDVAR BERREFJORD (LABOR) AND WELL-KNOWN NEW PEOPLE'S PARTY MEMBER HALFDAN HEGTUN, WHOSE ACTIVITIES INCLUDE PARTICIPATION IN SENATOR JAVITS' "COMMITTEE OF NINE."

4. NEWCOMERS WHO PROMISE TO ADD CONSIDERABLE SPICE TO STORTING PROCEEDINGS INCLUDE THE CHAIRMAN OF FOUR OF NORWAY'S SMALL FRINGE PARTIES. ANDERS LANGE, THE PEPPERY ARCH-CONSERVATIVE CHAIRMAN OF THE NEWLY-FORMED PARTY BY THE SAME NAME, WILL ENTER, ALONG WITH THREE OF HIS PARTY COLLEAGUES. THE CHAIRMEN OF ALL THREE PARTIES CONSTITUTING THE SOCIALIST ELECTORAL ALLIANCE WERE ALSO ELECTED: COMMUNIST PARTY CHAIRMAN REIDAR LARSEN (BECOMING THE FIRST COMMUNIST IN THE STORTING SINCE 1961); FINN GUSTAFSEN OF THE SOCIALIST PEOPLE'S PARTY (WHO SERVED FROM 1961 TO 1969);
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AND BERIT AAS, WHO ASSUMED THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE "DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISTS-AIK" WHEN THAT GROUP BROKE AWAY FROM THE THE LABOR PARTY EARLIER THIS YEAR.

5. IN WHAT MUST BE A PECULIARLY NORWEGIAN PRACTICE, LEADERS OF ALL POLITICAL PARTIES WATCHED RETURNS TOGETHER IN THE NRK BROADCASTING STUDIO FROM THE TIME POLLS CLOSED MONDAY NIGHT UNTIL 3 A.M. TUESDAY AND JOINED IN A 30 MINUTE DEBATE BEFORE TV CAMERAS AT 2 A.M. PRIME MINISTER KORVALD AND HIS COALITION COLLEAGUES AGREED THAT IF THE 78-77 SOCIALIST LEAD THEN PREVAILING PROVED TO BE THE FINAL RESULT, THE GOVERNMENT WAS READY TO RESIGN. KORVALD ADDED THAT, "UNDER NORMAL PRACTICE," THE RESIGNATION WOULD NOT OCCUR UNTIL THE NEW STORTING CONVENED--THUS APPEARING TO RULE OUT A CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT BEFORE OCTOBER. BRATTELI CONFIRMED THAT LABOR WAS READY TO TAKE OVER, COULD FORM A CABINET "WITHIN THREE DAYS," AND WOULD GOVERN BY DRAWING SUPPORT FROM RIGHT AND LEFT ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS. FINN GUSTAVSEN, JUBILANT OVER THE UNEXPECTEDLY STRONG SHOWING OF THE FAR LEFT, SERVED NOTICE THAT THE LEFTIST SOCIALISTS WOULD CONSTANTLY KEEP THE GOVERNMENT'S FEET TO THE FIRE ON MATTERS OF

TAXATION, DEFENSE POLICY, AND DEFENSE SPENDING.

6. AT NOON TODAY (SEPTEMBER 11) BRATTELI TOLD A RADIO INTERVIEWER THAT THE VOTE TALLIES WERE STILL TOO UNCERTAIN TO PERMIT ANY DEFINITIVE STATEMENTS, BUT THAT "THE SITUATION CALLS FOR COOPERATION ON A BROAD FRONT." IN HIS USUAL SPHINX-LIKE FASHION, HE DID NOT EXPLAIN THAT REMARK; IT COULD MEAN THAT, IN THE LIGHT OF ITS CATASTROPHIC LOSSES, THE LABOR PARTY MUST NOW REEXAMINE ITS TRADITIONAL REFUSAL TO ENTER INTO COALITION GOVERNMENTS. BUCHANAN

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